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MEMORANDUM FOR: RECORD Copy

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12 Sept 1984

The attached was hand carry by [redacted]  
to Tom Latimer, HPSCI, per request made by  
Rep. Hamilton who wish to have a written reply  
versus an oral briefing.

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SUBJECT: Afghanistan Situation Report

Military Situation

Today, after almost five years of Soviet occupation, resistance to the Communists continues strong throughout the country. The weak and divided Babrak regime seems unable to cope with the insurgency, and it will continue to depend on Soviet troops to maintain itself in power.

Despite frequent Soviet and Afghan military operations aimed at suppressing the insurgency, almost 60 percent of the population remains in areas outside of government control. With a weakened, poorly trained and unreliable army, the Government has come to depend almost entirely on the presence of Soviet forces. Except in joint operations with the Soviets, Afghan troops can do little more than hold their own garrisons. For their part, the Soviets remain frustrated and in a quandary that they will ever be able to militarily or politically control Afghanistan. Unless the Soviets increase their troop strength from the current authorized level of about 107,000 to around 500,000 men, they remain in a basic no-win situation.

The installation of the Chernenko regime witnessed no significant departures from earlier Soviet policies in Afghanistan. There is evidence that the Soviets now recognize the conflict will last decades and that there is little hope for a diplomatic solution on their terms.

According to a recent Agency analysis, the combat effectiveness of the insurgents is likely to continue to increase. Qualitative and quantitative improvements in insurgent forces have resulted in increased Mujaheddin effectiveness.

The insurgents have learned to use better tactics, intelligence, and rugged terrain to avoid enemy offensives and to attack convoys and isolated garrisons. Such improvements will slowly spread to smaller bands in remote areas, raising the level and scope of fighting throughout the country. Cooperation among insurgent groups also has increased markedly over the past two years, although fighting among groups continues to be a problem.

The insurgents benefit from the fact that the Soviet forces in Afghanistan are insufficient to crush the insurgency, and the Afghan Army is ineffective. Nevertheless, access to men and supplies from Pakistan, and possibly Iran, will be critical to continued insurgent effectiveness. Greater numbers of heavy

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machineguns, mines, automatic weapons and anti-tank rockets have enabled the insurgents to attack more effectively. Without such weapons, the extent and tempo of insurgent attacks would decline significantly.

Fighting in Afghanistan's cities increased substantially in 1983 through mid-1984 and caused growing concern among Soviet and Afghan officials. Reliable reporting on growing insurgent capabilities and the difficulties facing the Soviet and Afghan Government forces leads us to believe that the level of urban insurgency will continue to increase at least in the near term.

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Since the invasion the Soviets have lost an estimated 330 helicopters and 30 fixed-wing combat aircraft. Between mid-June and mid-July 1984 the Soviets lost 17 helicopters to insurgent gunfire. This is the highest number of confirmed losses in a one-month period since the invasion. This is a direct result of

effective use of heavy weapons, particularly heavy machineguns. So far this year, 1984, the Soviets have lost at least 35 aircraft--27 helicopters and 8 fixed-wing combat aircraft. Loss of these helicopters resulted in heavy casualties for the Soviets. To date, the Afghan air force has lost approximately 185 aircraft since the invasion.

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Through August 1984, Soviet forces in Afghanistan suffered at least 20,500 killed or wounded since the invasion. In the first five months of 1984 the Soviets had at least 1,150 combat casualties--including some 570 killed. More than 900 of the casualties occurred in April and May due to increased levels of fighting. Afghan forces have suffered 56,000 casualties since the start of the war. This includes approximately 17,000 killed and 39,000 wounded.

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Analysis shows the total dollar cost of Soviet operations in Afghanistan from the start of Soviet intervention through 1983 to be approximately \$14.3 billion. Of this figure, \$1.3 billion in costs represents helicopter losses; \$1.5 billion was spent for construction; \$2 billion was for direct military aid to the DRA; and \$9.1 billion represents operating costs.

### The Afghan Resistance

The major Afghan resistance groups based in Peshawar are loosely grouped into two alliances, both known as the Islamic Unity of Afghan Mujahidin. These alliances emerged following various efforts to promote overall resistance unity during the period 1980-1983 but have not evolved into the kind of coherent cooperative associations hoped for by their more optimistic promoters. One, the so-called fundamentalist alliance of seven resistance parties, is in a state of disarray, while the other, labelled the moderate alliance of three parties (for lack of a better name), remains a loose coalition looking toward former Afghan King Zahir Shah as a possible figurehead for achieving greater unity. Efforts to forge greater coordination have foundered on personal, tribal, and ideological differences among the key resistance leaders. Furthermore, the Peshawar-based groups represent only one slice of the Afghan resistance picture. Other important groups are based in Quetta, Iran, and inside Afghanistan, such as the Hazaras, who find little or no connection or affinity with the Peshawar organizations. In our view, these problems will continue to obstruct future attempts to create a unified Afghan resistance.

Given the fact that differences rooted deep in Afghan society and politics--both of the traditional variety as well as among a newly emerging group of religious/military leaders--characterize the Afghan resistance movement, we see little promise that the resistance organizations will coalesce into a single, unified organization in the foreseeable future. We may well see shifting alliances as one or another group determines its best interests (i.e., funds and weapons) are better served by cooperation with some other group or individual. This will make it difficult for the Afghans to present a united front either internationally or to their own people. However, experience has shown that such differences among the Peshawar-based Afghan leadership do not rule out cooperation in the field inside Afghanistan. The development of alliances and cooperative arrangements among local commanders inside Afghanistan has significantly strengthened the hand of the resistance against the Soviets and serves our interest in maintaining pressure on the ground as part of our effort to persuade the Soviets to consider a political solution in Afghanistan. Afghans are united in their desire to see the Soviets withdraw from Afghanistan, but political unity at this stage of their struggle may prove to be an illusion despite their expressed conviction that greater cooperation would be beneficial to their cause.

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